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RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEPGBA/USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0178

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/FO, AF/SPG, AF/RSA, AF/E, D: TAIYA SMITH.
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL MARR KPKO SU AU

SUBJECT: AMIS FUTURE - AU SETS PSC DATE, PARTNERS SEEK
COORDINATION GUIDANCE

¶1. This is an action request. See paragraph 7.

¶2. (SBU) Summary: According to African Union (AU) Peace and Security Commissioner Amb. Said Djinnit, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) will meet January 12 to decide the future of AMIS. Addis-based AU partners are seeking guidance from capitals on how to promote a positive PSC outcome, which would give the UN a green light to plan blue-hatting of AMIS in 2006. The AU's desire for frank dialogue on AMIS also presents the opportunity to ensure more strategic-level thinking on implementing December 2005 assessment mission recommendations, including securing AU requests for NATO and other partner assistance. End summary.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

¶3. (SBU) On December 23, AU Peace and Security Commissioner Djinnit responded to a letter sent by British Ambassador Dewar on behalf of all partners supporting AMIS. According to Djinnit, the AU PSC will meet January 12 to consider the AU Commission report on Darfur ahead of the January 20 expiration of AMIS' mandate. (Note: AU officials have informed partners that the Commission's report will include relevant extracts of the December AU-led assessment mission, an analysis of the Abuja Political Talks, and advice from AU Legal on the relationship between the AU and International Criminal Court activity on Darfur.) End note.

¶4. (SBU) The December assessment mission report is still with Amb. Djinnit for final approval, but contains a key paragraph on AMIS transition:

-- "It is further recommended that early consideration be given to all viable alternatives for maintaining a peace support operation in Darfur. It should, however, be borne in mind that if other institutions are to be involved, an early start to contingency planning will be required. In any case it is inevitable that AMIS presence in Darfur will be maintained for the next 6-9 months. In the longer term, a single operation covering the whole of Sudan including a settlement in the east will bring coherence and synergy, in addition to facilitating integration of increasingly complex political, humanitarian and military effort."

COMMENT: ENGAGEMENT FROM POST AND DEPARTMENT NEEDED

15. (SBU) In the run-up to the January 12 PSC meeting on Darfur, Post recommends continued efforts to assess PSC and other key AU member state views on the future of AMIS. Charge will be hosting a lunch with selected PSC Ambassadors January 10, which should present a timely opportunity to assess and influence. Per partner request, Amb. Djinnit has designated Darfur Integrated Task Force (DITF) Political Head Solomon Gomez and Military Head Col. Mbaye the main points of contact for partner interface while the liaison group is on recess. Post believes that continued senior-level engagement with the AU on the issue of AMIS future will be critical.

16. (SBU) The AU needs reassurance that partners are committed to enhancing African peacekeeping capability in the period before transition to a UN mission in Darfur, through seeking the re-hatting of some AU troops, and in the future through the African Standby Force and other AU-led efforts. The liaison group, which meets twice-weekly with the AU to pursue Darfur objectives, can be reconfigured as a working group to assist the AU with implementing mutually-agreed priorities from the assessment mission recommendations. Reinvigorating the liaison group will require AU willingness to dialogue on strategic issues and to accept additional partner technical assistance, including a request for NATO expertise for command and control functions. It will also require closer coordination between capitals and partner embassies in Addis Ababa.

17. (SBU) Post looks forward to working with Washington and key partners to bring about a positive and supportable PSC

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decision, as well as to improve AMIS capacity to address challenges in Darfur before a hopeful UN transition.

HUDDLESTON